DEVIL'S REIGN CHAPTER FOUR
TOP COW COMICS
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BALLISTIC
WOLVERINE
FEBRUARY $2.95 USA $4.05 CAN
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BENITEZ '96
AARON SOWD
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In loving memory of Mark Gruenwald

DEVIL'S REIGN

CHAPTER FOUR

TOP COW PRODUCTIONS

MARVEL COMICS

BALLISTIC / WOLVERINE

Special Thanks to Image Comics

The story so far...

Mephisto has come to Top Cow's dimension, bent on acquiring souls to make himself more powerful in his new home--and it seems Times Square in New York City is where he'll begin a new nefarious scheme. Ballistic, sometime member of the superhero team Cyberforce, is looking for that group's leader, Heatwave--who went AWOL. After enduring a wild ride on Ghost Rider's motorcycle, Ballistic finds herself no closer to discovering the whereabouts of Heatwave--but THAT is about to change...

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tried to pop claws out of his hands, but only managed to bloody his knuckles

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SONY
SONY
SONY
Coca-Cola
HOWARD
AIN'T AN AWFUL LOT IN THIS WORLD COULD MAKE ME COME DOWN TO TIMES SQUARE ON NEW YEARS EVE.
HAPPY NEW YEAR
BUT LANDAU, LUCKMAN & LAKE'S BEEN HANDLIN' MY FINANCES FOR A DOG'S AGE...
...AND SO FAR, THEY'VE DONE PRETTY GOOD BY ME.
ZOE CULLODEN'S MY CONTACT AT LL&L.
SHE AIN'T NEVER BEEN WHAT YOU CALL AN ALARMIST...
...SO, WHEN SHE SENDS AN URGENT MESSAGE TO MEET HER--
Dante's
Hole
Visit our fetish
--THE OL' CANUCKLE-HEAD FIRES UP HIS SCOOT AND RIDES.

WHEN THE BALL DROPS
AIN'T THIS SOMETHIN'.
THEY PUT A CLUB NAMED DANTE'S HOLE...
DEVIL'S REIGN
CHAPTER FOUR

...IN AN OLD CHURCH!
NOW, LL&L IS A FIRM THAT DEALS IN WHAT THEY CALL "INTER-DIMENSIONAL FINANCE".
THEY'VE GOT A FEW LAWYERS, AGENTS AND TRADERS WHO AIN'T QUITE HUMAN...
...NOT TOO MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THE LAWYERS, AGENTS AND TRADERS WE GOT HERE ON EARTH.
I'VE BEEN TO LL&L'S OFFICES IN MADRIPOOR, EDINBURGH, THE FAR SIDE O' THE UNIVERSE AND EVEN ONE ON PARK AVENUE SOUTH RIGHT HERE IN MANHATTAN...
...BUT I NEVER KNEW THEY HAD ONE IN TIMES SQUARE.
I'M LOOKIN' FER THE FETISH ROOM.
I'LL BET YOU ARE, SWEET-CAKES!
RIGHT DOWNSTAIRS AND THROUGH THE MOSH-O-TORIUM.
THE PUNDITS O' POP CULTURE DECLARED THE DEATH O' DECADENCE.
I THINK MAYBE THEM PUNDITS BEEN HANGIN' IN THE WRONG CLUBS.
SO, NOW I KNOW WHAT DECADENCE SMELLS LIKE...

...IT SMELLS LIKE VASELINE, VODKA AND VOMIT.
THAT MUST BE THE FETISH ROOM...
...THE PITCH O' THE SCREAMIN' SEEMS A BIT HIGHER FROM THAT DIRECTION.
WHEN I WALK THROUGH A BIKER BAR, I CAN FEEL THE SAWDUST SCRUNCHIN' UNDER MY BOOTS...
...LORD KNOWS WHAT THIS STUFF IS SQUISHIN' UNDERFOOT RIGHT NOW.
PROBABLY BEST I DON'T KNOW.

HEY, SHORT-STUFF!
WANT SOME TOTALLY EXQUISITE PAIN FOR THE NEW YEAR?
I'VE HAD ENOUGH IN MY TIME, THANKS.
THERE'S NEVER ENOUGH!
TRY HAVIN' ADAMANTIUM RIPPED OUT THROUGH YER PORES SOMETIME.
LIN, OH.
WC
LAST TIME I STEPPED THROUGH ONE O' THOSE DOORS IN AN LLAL OFFICE...
MINOR THREAT
...I ENDED UP ON THE FAR SIDE O' REALITY.
ZOE?
ARE YOU IN THERE?
IT'S LOGAN--
WHU--?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE??
I WAS ABOUT TO ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION, BUB!

BLAM!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
I'M THE ONE WHO'S DOIN' THE ASKIN' AROUND HERE!
BEST IMPROVE YER MARKSMANSHIP IF YA WANT ANSWERS, BUB.
SCHLIK!
NOW, I'M DOIN' THE ASKIN'--
--AND I WANNA KNOW WHAT A CHEAP PUNK LIKE YOU IS DOIN' SOILIN' AN LL&L OFFICE--
--AND I WANNA KNOW WHERE ZOE IS!
THEY LEFT ME HERE TO MAKE SURE NOBODY CAME THROUGH THE DOOR!
--BUT IT DIDN'T CATCH!
I'M OUTTA HERE!
NOW WHAT?
GOTTA GO ROUST GRACIE MANSION...?
THE MAYOR? THAT DON'T MAKE NO SENSE--
UNGH! MIND BLAST!
WHO'S THEY?
THE MAYOR'S GOONS! THAT'S WHERE ZOE CULLODEN IS--WITH THE MAYOR!
SOMEBODY'S TRYIN' TO CONTROL ME--

...IF THERE EVEN IS A GRACIE MANSION IN THIS SLICE O' REALITY--
--'CAUSE IT SURE AIN'T THE REALITY THAT WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE O' THAT W.C. DOOR I WALKED THROUGH.
IN AN LLBL OFFICE, W.C. STANDS FOR WARP CHAMBER.
SONY
Coca-Cola
HEY! YOU GOONS LEAVE THAT POOR GUY BE!
THWAPP!
THE MAYOR WANTS UNBRIDLED DECADENCE IN THE SQUARE FOR WHEN THE BALL DROPS...
...AND THAT MEANS NO PUBLIC UPTIGHTNESS!
YOU CAN'T BEAT UP ON A MAN FOR BEING EM-BARRASSED!
WE CAN DO WHATEVER WE WANT!
WE'RE THE LAW!
SCHRRRPP!
THE GESTAPO WAS THE LAW, TOO--
--THAT DIDN'T MAKE 'EM RIGHT!
ARRRGH! SUBDUE HIM!
FORGET SUBDUING HIM--
--WASTE HIM!!
ZASH!

THAT'S EASY TO SAY, BUB--
BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE AROUND HERE WHO'S DOIN' ANY WASTIN'!
SCHRRUUUPS!
DON'T WUSS OUT ON ME, YA LILY-LIVERED YAHOOS--!
--I'M JUST GETTIN' WARMED UP!
GIVE HIM THE NEURAL STUN BLAST!

THAT PUT HIM DOWN FOR THE COUNT
THE MAYOR NEVER BRIEFED US ABOUT THIS ONE--
WE'RE STILL ACCOUNTABLE!
WE SHOULD TAKE HIM TO THE MAYOR
WE COULD BE IN A LOT OF TROUBLE OVER THIS...
I SAY WE JUST OFF THIS CREEP AND--
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
ARRRRGH!
WHU--?
THEY'RE ALL DEAD!
BRILLIANT DEDUCTION SHERLOCK
WHO--?

YOU CAN CALL ME BALLISTIC.
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUDDY--
--BUT YOU'RE DEFINITELY ON THE "TO STOMP" LIST WITH THE MAYOR'S BULLY-BOYS AND THAT MAKES YOU OKAY IN MY BOOK
I'VE BEEN RIDING AROUND ON THE BACK OF A MOTORCYCLE WITH A JOKER WITH A FLAMING SKULL FOR A HEAD.
SO I MAY OR MAY NOT BE PLAYING WITH A FULL DECK
I'M JUST LAYING MY CARDS ON THE TABLE SO YOU CAN DECIDE WHETHER YOU WANT TO THROW IN WITH ME OR NOT
YOU'VE BEEN RIDIN' WITH GHOST RIDER?
THAT'S NOT A [illegible] RECOMMENDATION AT ALL.
I'M LOOKIN' FOR MY FRIEND, [illegible] HOOKED UP WITH THIS MAYOR GEEK--
NOT GOOD.
[illegible] COME WITH ME, AND I'LL FILL YOU IN
WE HAVE TO ACT FAST WHATEVER'S GOING DOWN IS GOING TO HAPPEN AT MIDNIGHT!

I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEBODY TOO
HIS NAME IS HEATWAVE AND HE WENT MISSING A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO
HEATWAVE?
SOME MONIKER
SOUNDS LIKE HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ZAP INFRARED ENERGY OUT O' HIS FINGERTIPS.
A LONG DRINK OF WATER NAMED ZOE
BINGO.
SOUNDS LIKE SHE'S GOT HER BRAINWAVES SCRAMBLED, TOO
ANYWAY, I FOUND OUT THAT HEATWAVE IS HERE IN NEW YORK AND HE'S BEING MIND-CONTROLLED
I FELT A BLAST O' THAT ACT ON MYSELF
HEATWAVE CALLS HIMSELF THE MAYOR HERE AND HE'S GOT A SERIOUS HITTER WORKING FOR HIM...
WHAT'S THE NEXT MOVE, K'DOO?
WE GO AND GET THEM
LET'S DO IT

WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM
MIDNIGHT IS SOON UPON US.
THE ELDRITCH HOUR AT WHICH THE GREAT REAPING SHALL TRANSPIRE
AND YOU DARE TO COME GROVELING WITH A REPORT OF YOUR PATHETIC FAILURE?
YOU KNOW ABOUT THE INTRUDER?
THE ONE WHO BLEW AWAY OUR ENFORCERS IN TIMES SQUARE--?
THERE WERE TWO OF THEM, YOU INCOMPETENT MAGGOT
TWO INTERLOPERS WHO WOULD TAINT THE COMING DIONYSIAN ECSTASY AND CATCLYSMIC DESCENSION WITH TINGES OF REASON AND COMPASSION?
YES
I KNEW

HE WILL KEEP HIS PROMISE THEN?
WE WILL ALL...?
HE DOES NOT RENEGE ON HIS PROMISES LIKE--
--THAT OTHER ONE
WHEN THE CLOCK BELL TOLLS THE TWELFTH STROKE AND THE GREAT BALL DESCENDS,
, ALL WHO HAVE RECEIVED HIS UNHOLY COMMUNION SHALL DESCEND IN RAPTUROUS IGNITION INTO HIS LAKE OF REFINING FIRE
IT'S FIFTEEN MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT LOGAN
I HATE ARRIVIN' EARLY AT PARTIES DARLIN'
BRRRAAP!
KA-BOOM!

IT'S SO UNCOOL BEIN' THE FIRST ONE TO SHOW UP!
KINDA DESERTED AROUND HERE
MAYBE THE MAYOR FORGOT TO SEND OUT THE INVITES?
THE MAYOR DOESN'T FORGET MUCH OF ANYTHING.
BEFORE ALL THIS, WHEN HE WAS MEATWAVE, HE HAD A MIND LIKE A STEEL TRAP.
AND NOW, THAT HE'S BEING MIND-CONTROLLED BY MEPHISTO, I DON'T THINK ANYTHING IS GETTING PAST HIM!
MEPHISTO EH...?

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK OL' BRIMSTONE BRITCHES IS BEHIND THIS FOOFARAW?
I GLEANED IT FROM WHAT GHOST RIDER SAID BEFORE HE RODE OFF--
--AND FROM WHAT HE DIDN'T SAY
FLAME-HEAD WAXES POETIC WHEN THE CHIPS ARE FLYIN'
BUT HE'S USUALLY ON THE MONEY- -SNIFF-
AH, OUR GUESTS OF HONOR HAVE ARRIVED
WON'T YOU JOIN THE FESTIVITIES, BALLISTIC--
--AND WOLVERINE?
HE KNEW
MEPHISTO'S DOIN
ZOE'S IN THE NEXT ROOM
ASTUTE CALL
WASTE THEM
THEN THE MAYOR IS, ALSO
NOT YET ZOE

NOT WHEN THERE IS A CHANCE TO ADD TWO MORE SOULS TO THE MIDNIGHT TALLY
THESE TWO?
WHY NOT?
THE MORE THE MERRIER
DO YOU FEEL IT LOGAN?
THE MIND-TOUCH
PSI-CONTROL INVOLVES KILLIN NEURONS--
THE OL' MUTANT HEALIN' FACTOR WORKS AGAINST IT
SO DO MY CYBER-IMPLANTS
YOU'RE BOTH RESISTANT, I SEE
PERHAPS A MODICUM OF EXQUISITE EXCRUCIATION IS IN ORDER HERE?
A FORETASTE OF ETERNAL CONFLAGRATION TO COME...

OH, I CAN GIVE YOUR GOONS A LITTLE TASTE OF THAT, MYSELF!
THERMITE GRENADE?
BUT OF COURSE!
ERADICATE THEM!
I GUESS THE PARTY INVITE JUST GOT RESCINDER, HUH?
SHUT UP AND SHOOT!
I AIN'T TOO BIG ON GUNS.
BLAM!
BLAM!
PAM!
PAM! PAM!
PAM! PAM!

BUT THEY'RE HANDY FOR CLEARIN' A PATH--
--SO'S I CAN SWING MY CLAWS ON HIZZONER, THE MAYOR!
IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND, ZOE?
MY PLEASURE
ET MAINTENANT LA COUP DE GRACE SIL-VOUS-PLAIT
CONSIDER HIM FINISHED, YOUR HONOR
NOT SO FAST, SUGAR--

--I HAVEN'T GOT MY LICKS IN YET!
TSK TSK...
TS'HAPP!
...YOU LET YOUR GUARD DOWN, ZOE.
SO DID YOU, BUB!
THERE IS NO CONTEST BETWEEN US, WOLVERINE--

NONE AT ALL!
KOOOMP!
I WIELD A FIRE BORN OF A CYBERNETIC FURNACE, BUT IT IS AS A FLICKERING MATCH TO THE INCANDESCENT GLORY OF MEPHISTO!
AND NOW, FOR THE FINAL STROKE--
THWOMMM
ZOE--!
--I THOUGHT YOU WERE A PSI-ZOMBIE!
I WAS...
UNTIL BALLISTIC PUSHED ME OVER THE PAIN THRESHOLD AND THE CONTROL LINK WAS BROKEN!
IT'S ALMOST MIDNIGHT! ALL THOSE PEOPLE OUT IN TIMES SQUARE--
--WE GOTTA GET OUT THERE AND SAVE 'EM!
SAVE THEM?
THERE SHALL BE NO SALVATION FOR THEM--
--ONCE THEY BELONG TO MEPHISTO!

BONG!
BONG!
BONG!
BONG!
BONG!
BONG!
BONG!
BONG!
BONG!
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
MAY AULD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT AND--
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
THE SINGING STOPPED!
TOO LATE!
WHAT HAPPENED OUT HERE?
ALL THOSE THOUSANDS O' PEOPLE WHO WERE OUT HERE CELEBRATIN'--
THEY'VE ALL BEEN SWEPT AWAY--
DRINK
RIOT GRRLS
"--STRAIGHT TO HELL!!"

MMMM... BEAUTIFUL.
NOW, MS. SARA PEZZINI, IT'S YOUR TURN...
HAH HAHA! HAHA! HAHA!
NEXT -- WOLVERINE / WITCHBLADE